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## EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION

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### ⑯ Secure file erasure.

⑰ A method (10) of deleting a file (20) stored on a permanent storage medium (15) of a computer system (16) comprises the steps of selecting (11) the stored file (20) for deletion, encrypting (13) the stored file (20) using a random key (21), and deleting (14) the file directory pointer to the file (20). The present invention permits a user to erase files from a

permanent storage spaced in a manner that makes the file totally unreadable by others. If the user does not expect to undelete the file, a one-way encryption algorithm (18) may be used to increase the speed of secure deletion of the file. If the user does not destroy the key, he or she may recover the file.











